

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 IO-13 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00

NEAE-00 /092 W

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P 061108Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8431

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4314

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, UR

SUBJECT: SYRIAN FONMIN VISIT TO MOSCOW

1. SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM, ACCOMPANIED BY MFA DIRECTOR OF EAST EUROPEAN AFFAIRS, A MEMBER OF MFA'S DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO DAMASCUS MOUKHITDINOV, DEPARTED DAMASCUS 1400 JULY 5 FOR MOSCOW. KHADDAM REPORTEDLY CARRIED A LETTER FROM ASAD TO BREZHNEV. SYRIAN MEDIA JULY 6 STATES HE MET ON ARRIVAL WITH FONMIN GROMYKO.

2. ACCORDING KNOWLEDGEABLE EAST EUROPEAN AMBASSADORS, TIMING OF KHADDAM'S TRIP WAS NOT FINALLY SET UNTIL JULY 4, ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN SYRO-SOVIET DISCUSSION ABOUT SUCH A TRIP DURING PREVIOUS FEW DAYS.

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3. DEPUTY FONMIN SHAQRA TOLD AMBASSADOR JULY 5 THAT

KHADDAM VISIT HAD BEEN ARRANGED AT "INITIATIVE OF BOTH SIDES." HE SAID IT WOULD FOCUS ON LEBANESE PROBLEM WHICH IS "OUR SOLE PREOCCUPATION." HE EXPECTS KHADDAM BACK IN DAMASCUS JULY 8.

ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR MANCIUR SAID THAT TWO WEEKS AGO IN BUCHAREST ASAD HAD COMMENTED CRITICALLY ABOUT SOVIET' APPARENT UNWILLINGNESS TO USE ITS INFLUENCE TO DISCIPLINE LEBANESE LEFTISTS. HE SPECULATED THAT KAHDDAM WOULD BE ASKING FOR DISPLAY OF GREATER SOVIET ENERGY IN THIS REGARD. (FRENCH AMBASSADOR ROUILLON HAS TOLD US THAT ASAD ALSO MADE A NUMBER OF COMMENTS CRITICAL OF THE SOVIET'S POLICY VIS-A-VIS LEBANON TO THE FRENCH WHEN IN PARIS.) ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR SPECULATED THAT WHILE IN MOSCOW KHADDAM MIGHT ALSO RECEIVE SOVIET DECISION RE A STRETCH OUT IN SYRIAN PAYMENTS FOR SOVIET ARMS. THIS WOULD BE IN ANSWER TO REQUEST WHICH HE UNDERSTANDS SYRIANS MADE TO KOSYGIN IN DAMASCUS DURING EARLY JUNE. HE CONCURRED, HOWEVER, THAT KHADDAM WAS NOT GOING TO MOSCOW TO NEGOTIATE ON ANY SUCH TECHNICAL ISSUE.

5. COMMENT:

AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF ASAD'S RECENT TRIPS TO PARIS, BELGRADE AND BUCHAREST, DURING WHICH PRESIDENT APPARENTLY HAD SOME SUCCESS IN JUSTIFYING SYRIA'S POLICY VIS-A-VIS LEBANON AND THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE, WE ASSUME THAT KHADDAM WILL BE MAKING SIMILAR POINTS TO SOVIET LEADERSHIP. RECENT SOVIET MEDIA OUTPUT CRITICAL OF SYRIAN BEHAVIOR TOWARDS PALESTINIANS MAY HAVE PROMPTED ASAD TO SEND HIS FONMIN AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME.
MURPHY

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